

Sun-Tribune

A Metroland community newspaper
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LETTERS to the EDITOR

Thanks for helping Badger, Nfld

We wish to thank all those who helped in our fundraising efforts for the Town of Badger, Nfld., which was devastated by flooding Feb. 15.

Your participation at our St. Patrick's In The Bay fundraising dance at the Cedar Beach Pavilion in Whitchurch-Stouffville, along with personal contributions, enabled us to raise \$1,500 for the Red Cross Town of Badger Flood Relief Fund.

Special thanks to the performers The Murphy Brothers, Uncle Al and Gals and the volunteers who donated their services.

Statistics Canada reports of all Canadians, Newfoundlanders are the most generous donors to charities and we are delighted so many friends of Newfoundland responded to our appeal and reciprocated so generously.

JOHN HAWCO

FONA (FRIENDS OF NEWFOUNDLAND ASSOC.)
MARKHAM

Tory budget ignores constitution

On Thursday, a provincial budget was presented by a finance minister appointed by a premier with no mandate from the people.

While this is not extraordinary, the fact it was not presented in the legislature is. This amounts to nothing less than a unilateral change to our Constitution.

The Constitution consists not just of the Constitution Act, but a series of unwritten rules and precedents dating back hundreds of years. This represents a clear breach of this unwritten but most important part of our Constitution.

This is a threat to democracy. The present Eves/Harris government seems to believe democracy, like the Olympics, is an event that happens every four years.

Democracy is a process that should be a continuing part of the political process. Part of this process involves the working of the legislature. Arguably, the most important business of the legislature is the presentation and approval of the annual budget.

Instead of a such a budget, we had a presentation to a select audience of people favoured by the Eves/Harris government in a building owned not by the people of Ontario, but by auto parts manufacturer Magna Inc.

I listened to Finance Minister Janet Ecker explain her reasons for this last week on TVO and was so disgusted I had to turn off the TV. Her supercilious smirk said "It doesn't matter what anyone says, this is what we are going to do."

Mr. Eves himself seems to think because we are in a new century, old democratic rules should not prevail. Over the last eight years his party has shown it shares his belief. There is little democracy left in Ontario.

My biggest concern in all of this, is our



"strong voice for Markham" (remember the 1999 campaign slogan?). Dave Tsubouchi. Where was he when education and health care were decimated, people were killed in Walkerton and hydro was ruined?

Mr. Tsubouchi is not a strong voice. He is not even a weak voice. He is no voice.

Markham has to wake up. Are we a sleepy, lazy, suburb content to have a non-voice representing us? If I lived in Oakville (represented by speaker Gary Carr, also a Tory), I would at least know I was represented by a person who cared for and understood democracy.

Ernie Eves' action on the budget disgusts me. Mr. Tsubouchi's inaction does not surprise me.

WAYNE BLACK
MARKHAM

Too much spent on minorities

Re: Minorities not getting help, March 22.

When will Tony Wong and others understand that Markham and York Region are an English-speaking community?

Why do they think departments or positions should be set up, on the backs of the taxpayers, to help people who do not speak the language?

Yes, some of them are taxpayers, too, but they are taxpayers in Canada, where English and French are the operating languages.

I believe the Chinese community should

be responsible to help its own people who have language or cultural problems.

The town's budget for translation has increased dramatically and I think this is a disgrace. Why should I, in my English-speaking community, pay for translation services for immigrants who want to live here, knowing full well what language was spoken?

No, I am not racist. I have many friends who are Chinese and they speak anywhere from very little English to good English. And very often, they don't frequent our small businesses, either.

If I were Markham council, I'd worry about losing all our English-speaking businesses.

If I were the region, I would worry about being forced to provide translation for all immigrants. If you do it for the Asian community, you must do it for the rest. That applies to Markham, too.

IAN ROGERS
UNIONVILLE

Why don't we just switch sides?

What's the difference between exercising freedom of speech and airing dirty laundry in public? If you watched the Academy Awards on TV earlier this week, you, too, might be asking yourself that question.

If I didn't know better, I would say there's not one American standing behind U.S. President George Bush's decision to wage war

against Iraq. Was that public outcry the sweetness of liberty or just democracy gone sour?

Funny thing is, while prominent Americans were rebelling against their leadership, Canadians have been slamming our prime minister for not going to war.

Why don't we just switch sides?

SANDRA REED
MARKHAM

Iraq war is immoral, illegal

The federal government's decision to stay out of the war in Iraq is correct because the war is illegal and immoral. The decision not only shows Prime Minister Jean Chretien's outstanding statesmanship but more importantly, it signifies a milestone in our history.

"With glowing hearts we see thee rise, the true north strong and free." Nothing could be more exciting and gratifying than to realize we have grown up and matured as a nation.

Never mind the worthless outcries of the Progressive Conservative and Alliance parties. Nothing short of a complete union with the United States will shut them up because these are the people who still find comfort under the skirt of the Americans.

These are the people who do not have spines. Whenever there is criticism of the United States by members of the Liberal Party, they would jump up and attack them.

However, when there is criticism of Canada from south of the border, they do not have the guts to stand up to defend the land that has nurtured them.

It must have been a difficult decision for the federal government because of our dependence on the U.S. market. That dependence will also hurt our political unity. A case in point is the recent motion in Alberta's legislature to support the war against Iraq.

It seems that, in some provinces at least, decisions made in Washington have much more bearing than those made in Ottawa. Therefore, Ottawa should take the bizarre motion in Alberta seriously, and re-examine our trade policy.

We should diversify and seek new trading partners as a counterweight to the U.S. market. The stick the American ambassador has threatened us with should serve as a warning.

We should not allow ourselves to repeat what happened to Hawaii. Its dependence on the American market for sugar exports resulted in its annexation by the U.S.

We need to realize the expansion of the U.S. is quite different from earlier European colonizers in that direct political control has been substituted with trade and commerce.

U.S. Secretary of State James Blaine (1830-93) once said, "Canada is like an apple on a tree just beyond reach; let it alone and in due time it will fall into our hands." As a nation among nations, rather than of a nation, we should "stand on guard."

YIYANG
UNIONVILLE

LETTERS POLICY

The Stouffville Tribune welcomes your letters. All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The Tribune reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space.

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